Twentieth Century Builders Rival Old Egyptians

MAN, always the builder, has crowded his experience of 5000 years—since the days of the Egyptian Pyramids—into fashioning the Grand Coulee Dam, which has taken its place as the eighth wonder of the world.

Holding in check the mighty Columbia, at a point where the river flows through a lava-rimmed, 1600-foot-deep chasm on its way to the sea, the dam dwarfs the efforts of the Builder Cheops, to whom is accredited the largest of the pyramids at Gizeh, Egypt.

The ancient sepulcher of kings has been surpassed in size nearly four times by the Grand Coulee Dam, and, instead of each block of limestone rock hewn, drawn, and set in place by hand, the latest scientific equipment, through the ingenuity of modern man, stands ready at his bidding to turn the toil of many hands into a throbbing, quickened pace that does not end as darkness settles over the vast project. Then, once again, science turns night into day with flood lights that the work may go on and no interruption may change the pulse of the greatest task ever undertaken. To this end, men and machinery produce a harmony of motion, building night and day without a pause. What he has created, man puts to his use in developing the intricate details of the program which combines steel and concrete to form the mammoth dam across the powerful flood of water, moving endlessly to the Pacific, 600 miles to the west.

The Grand Coulee Dam is located in central Washington, 94 miles to the north and west of Spokane, and 248 miles by highway east of Seattle. In size, it is the second structure created by man to exceed that of the Grand Pyramid which was undertaken between 3733 and 3700 B.C.

Pyramids Are Outsized

The monument to the skill of the Egyptian king covers 13 acres at its base, and its original height has been set at 482 feet.

In comparison to that ancient cathedral of the dead, man's latest endeavor has a base of nearly four times that of the pyramid at Gizeh and the height above the lowest rock towers 550 feet. The top thickness of the dam is 30 feet along its 4300-foot course.

Though already covered by water and backed by the ever-growing lake which now is forming, the dam has a footing of 500 feet. Just as in the Cheops pyramid, the dam, too, has its galleries. They serve for gate inspection and control, drainage, grouting, cooling, and other purposes. These cavernous passages will extend for eight miles through the honey-combed concrete block, thereby making the subterranean recesses and crypts possible future beehives for much activity.